Microsoft 365 Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description): **Microsoft 365 Email and Calendaring (Exchange) Service**

The University provides email and calendaring services to all staff and students as part of services within the Microsoft 365 platform.

The Microsoft Exchange Service running within the University processes email (communication), calendaring, contact, scheduling and collaboration activities that users perform. The service is designed to give users access to the messaging platform from mobile and desktops devices to web-based systems like the browsers, to help with productivity.

While users collaborate through email, calendar and document sharing, storage and security features within the platform provide the University the capability to securely store user data, archive content and execute compliance tasks.

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark **yes** against the applicable reason):

- Proposed new policy/practice
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice **Yes**
- Other (please state):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Alex Carter**

Job title: **Head of Service Management.**

School/service/unit: **Apps Service Management, Information Services Group (ISG)**

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:

- affects primary or high-level functions of the University - **Yes**
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? - **Yes**
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? - **Yes**

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- Age
- Disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership[1]

Apart from the equality groups of pregnancy and maternity as well as marriage or civil partnership, Microsoft 365 Email and Calendaring (Exchange) Service is capable of impacting all of the other groups, as all staff and students of the University have access to Microsoft's Email Service, which is a productivity tool provided by the University, as part of its IT system.

Although the Email service has the primary function of managing emails and calendars, the service also is also capable of holding and displaying user information, either fed into it through other IT services/system or as added/edited directly on Microsoft 365 platform by users.

Some of the information added by a user becomes available to everyone in within the University to see. This may be of particular relevance to the protected characteristic of sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

This service may be of particular relevance to the protected characteristic of disability, in that the platform will need to be accessible in terms of meeting current guidelines as stated by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, including compatibility with assistive technology. The University has a web accessibility policy, which is based on the WCAG 2.1 AA standard. Reasonable adjustments will be in place should a disabled user prove unable to use the email service, and that we were unable to rectify. (https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/website/accessibility/accessibility-policy).

Microsoft 365 Email and Calendaring (Exchange) Service may be of relevance to the protected characteristic of race as the system will automatically be in English. This is mitigated by the fact that the main teaching language of the university of English. Also, the language preference can be easily updated in the settings tab of Microsoft Outlook. This could therefore have a positive impact on the protected characteristic of race.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:
Microsoft has a WCAG 2.0 compliance report on various models Microsoft Outlook application and platforms which can be found in the link below.
WCAG 2.0 reports for Microsoft products - Microsoft Industry Blogs
New features of this service will be announced via the appropriate University news channel and feedback monitored and reviewed against the listed protected characteristics.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:

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[1] Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:

Most of the information displayed about a user are the information that would have been initially supplied by the same user.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]

Microsoft 365 Email and Calendaring (Exchange) Service has the ability to advance equality of opportunity as the service will be available 24/7, and can be accessed via various platforms, including mobile devices. This will allow access for groups who require flexible working hours, such as disabled users, groups with certain religious beliefs which restricts the days or times they can work or those under the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity and those with caring responsibilities.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

The University has a dedicated webpage providing information about the University's Email Services including basic guidance on set up and usage. This can be found here: [What is Office 365? | The University of Edinburgh](#)

- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?

- Any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations:

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

Option 1: ==*__No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.__*==

Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.

Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified

Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.

G. Action and Monitoring

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[2] This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).
This service will be monitored via Microsoft roadmap. Any feature update will be reviewed and this assessment modified where required, before implementation.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?

   Whenever there is a feature modification or whenever feedback requiring action is received from equality groups or communities

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):
Seye Kuti. Office 365 Service manager.

Accepted by (name): **Alex Carter (He/Him)**
[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: 16 June 2023.

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk